

TO: Committee on Government Administration and Elections

FROM: Valerie Kennedy, Coventry CT
HRO Representative CHRO

DATE: March 7, 2011

SUBJECT: Governor's Bill 1010

The proposed changes in Section 20 of Bill 1010 affecting C.G.S. Section 46a-68 not only eliminate Affirmative Action but also severely inhibit the effectiveness of Equal Employment Opportunity while saving no money and decreasing efficiency. This is comparable to removing OSHA from the oversight and enforcement of safety requirements and eliminating the safety laws while turning the responsibility for monitoring safety to the industry and letting it set its own safety standards.

Laws were enacted to ensure citizens of CT were given fair and equitable treatment when seeking state jobs or promotions and in all other aspects of Human Resources activity. As with OSHA, laws to protect individuals were passed and enforced because self-monitoring by industries, or in this case state agencies, did not provide the best protection. CHRO adopted regulations that required all agencies, especially DAS, to report their Human Resources activity to CHRO so there was an independent analysis of these activities ensuring the rights of citizens were protected.

Affirmative Action Regulations also provide Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists with laws to which they refer when challenged by their agency's management regarding directions for search and promotion committees. Regulations, not policies, give Equal Employment Opportunity a chance at survival in state agencies. CHRO, as an independent enforcement agency, should retain responsibility for oversight and enforcement of Equal Employment Opportunity.

DAS has responsibility for statewide Human Resources and responsibility for implementing Affirmative Action in several other state agencies. It is a gross conflict of interest to move the oversight of Human Resources and Affirmative Action to the agency with primary responsibility of those functions. This will compromise the legitimacy of such monitoring and possibly result in an increase in discrimination complaints filed against state agencies.

Despite repeated efforts to eliminate the independence of CHRO and the inability to hire professional staff, the monitoring and enforcement of Affirmative Action continues. As a result of these efforts, there is an almost 32% reduction in complaints filed against state agencies since 2005. This is one cost saving outcome that should not be overlooked.